

# **Section 8**

## **Community Relations and Public Participation**

### **8.1 General**

The HEER Office is committed to involving citizens in the hazardous waste cleanup process. Our effort will be based on two-way communication designed not only to keep citizens informed about site progress, but also to give them the opportunity to provide input into site decisions. Because not every site will have a significant impact on a local community, the HEER Office will conduct its community relations efforts according to community needs and interest in site activities.

The HEER Office will encourage the participation of all interested parties in all phases of the removal and remedial process. At sites where the public has expressed a strong interest in commenting on any proposed response action, the HEER Office may elect to utilize the public participation activities normally reserved for remedial actions regardless of whether the site is being addressed through the removal or remedial process.

The overall objectives of the HEER Office's community relations activities are to:

- (1) Provide the public the opportunity to express comments on and provide input to technical decisions.
- (2) Inform the public of planned or ongoing actions.
- (3) Identify and resolve conflicts.

These objectives will guide the planning and implementation of community relations efforts at each site.

### **8.2 Community Interviews**

The HEER Office may conduct informal face-to-face interviews with selected community residents, public interest groups, media representatives, state or local officials, or other interested or affected parties. The purpose of these interviews is to obtain first-hand information about the community near the site and to gain an understanding of the site's history, the community's involvement with the site and the political climate in the area. This information will lay the groundwork for developing an effective community relations plan for the site if required.